




**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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TO : Guy Davenport

FROM : Larry Beerkircher, 
Pelagic Observer Program

SUBJECT: First quarter (2008) observer coverage summary.

The Pelagic Observer Program (POP) achieved an 11.1% overall coverage rate (9.0% outside the Gulf of Mexico) for the first quarter period of 2008 (January 1 to March 31). Selection letters were sent by certified mail service (return receipt) on December 15, 2007 to 26 vessel permit holders (owners and/or operators) who were selected for coverage based on fishing activity in the northwestern Atlantic (excluding the Gulf of Mexico) for notification of observer coverage. Also, on February 15th, 2008, selection letters were sent by certified mail service (return receipt) to an additional 55 vessel permit holders (owners and/or operators) who were selected for coverage based on fishing activity in the Gulf of Mexico. The POP had the responsibility of the regular coverage requirement in the Northwest Atlantic, including 100 % observer coverage between March 9 and June 9 the Gulf of Mexico. During this quarter the POP was also assigned responsibility for deploying observers on board 2 vessels involved in a cooperative research project in the FEC and SAB Closed Areas, pending completion of a contract with Nova Southeastern University which would allow placement of Nova observers. This report will only cover effort observed outside the closed areas (i.e. only non-experimental coverage).

Of special note, there were three (3) vessels (Victoria, Tran Brothers, and Morning Stars) selected for coverage in Quarter 1 (2008) which had fishing effort in both Quarter 1 and Quarter 2.



For the purposes of this quarterly report, vessel hauls on or after January 1 until March 31, along with any incidental takes observed during this quarterly period (number of sets observed, days at-sea, animals caught) will be included in this summary. Overall during this quarter, observers spent 406 days at sea on 25 fishing vessels, which resulted in 187 hauls observed and a coverage rate of 11.1%. During the 32 observed trips (Tables 1 and 2), set effort occurred in the geographical areas of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), the Florida East Coast (FEC), the South Atlantic Bight (SAB), and the Tuna North (TUN).

During the regular fishery pelagic longline trips covered by observers, a total of 149,902 hooks were fished. The total catch observed consisted of 4,789 fish representing 45 species of fish. The catch data was comprised of 1,711 swordfish, 183 bigeye tuna, 519 yellowfin tuna, 45 bluefin tuna, 78 albacore tuna, 91 other tuna species, 187 dolphin fish (mahi), 56 wahoo, 138 billfish species, 708 other finfish (escolar, lancetfish, etc.), 94 skates/rays, 0 small coastal sharks, 615 large coastal sharks, and 159 pelagic sharks. During the quarter, observers also recorded incidental takes of protected species (Table 3) which included 9 sea turtles (8-leatherback-alive; 1-loggerhead-alive), in addition to 1 marine mammal (1-Risso's dolphin-dead). No seabirds were observed captured this quarter, further, the POP recorded no sawfish catches during the quarter; this species is not likely to occur in the pelagic environment. Table 4 shows effort and incidental take inside the closed areas (experimental effort); incidental take in this fishery comprised 2 sea turtles (2-leatherback-alive).

Because a majority of the trips selected and observed during this quarter occurred during the March 9th - June 9th period of 100% observer coverage in the Gulf or were part of experimental fishing effort (22 trips, 67% of total trips observed in Quarter 1, Table 3) a complete discussion on vessels not observed is not provided in this report. Instead, only vessels selected for coverage outside the March 9th 100% coverage requirement in the Gulf of Mexico are reported on with respect to non-compliance. During the quarter, the POP did not place observers on 12 of 26 of these vessels selected (46%, Table 5); thus reducing the target coverage of the POP by 62 sets. However, it should be noted that coverage of these vessels was made difficult by the diversion of all of the POP's

active observers, excepting one, to either the Gulf of Mexico during March 9th through the end of the quarter, or the experimental fishing project. There were five selected vessels listed in Table 5 as not being covered due to no observer being available. These vessels reduced the POP's coverage opportunities by a minimum of 31 sets. Five vessels did not conduct pelagic longline fishing operations during the quarter and the remainder (one vessel) did not take an observer due to lack of a safety decal and poor communication with the POP office. Given the extensive time and logistical demands of the 100% coverage in the Gulf and the experimental fishery, the POP's achievement of over 8% coverage for the areas outside the Gulf of Mexico (combined) was unexpected.

In keeping with the BO reporting requirements from the POP office, observers filled out the turtle handling and release gear forms on 24 of the 25 second quarter covered vessels (including Gulf of Mexico and experimental fishery vessels). Of the vessels selected and observed in Quarter 1, 100% of the vessels had the equipment needed for removing gear from turtles in the water (at least 3 of 4 items aboard), and 100% had most of the equipment for removing gear if the turtle is boated (6 or more items aboard). Additionally, 50% of the observed vessels also had the turtle tether aboard, which is voluntary at this time. A PDF document of the observer turtle gear forms will be posted on a secure site of the POP website. Finally, the cumulative number of unique vessels observed since the effective date of the sea turtle conservation regulations (July, 2004), now stands at 92 vessels covered (Table 6).

Attachments:

Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

cc: The POP office files; Richard Cook, NOAA-Fisheries SERO/OLE
liaison.

Table 1: Regular coverage (8%) of the longline fleet (excluding vessels covered under the 100% requirement in the Gulf of Mexico). Number of vessels observed, areas of fishing activity, total hauls observed, and total days at-sea conducted by the SEFSC Miami Laboratory POP from January 1 to March 31, 2008.

Vessel Name	Trip Number	Area	Total Hauls	Total Sea Days
936041 CECILIA II	P01135	GOM	5	17
628471 REBEL LADY	T02039	TUN	10	29
690722 SOUTHERN LADY	Q04001	FEC	7	10
1031845 DESTINY	J02072	FEC	16	27
919799 BLUE SEA I	P01136	GOM	6	15
956008 DAKOTA	J02071	SAB	6	11
1029594 QUEEN MARY	S01095	GOM	6	9
911014 PEACEFUL LADY	X03005	GOM	6	10
912738 JOSHUA NICOLE	X03006	FEC	1	4
912738 JOSHUA NICOLE	X03007	FEC	4	7
609121 CAROL ANN	D04048	FEC	2	9
609121 CAROL ANN	D04050	FEC	2	11
		SAB	2	
656259 KRISTIN LEE	S01096	FEC	3	11
656259 KRISTIN LEE	U04001	FEC	3	6
Totals:			79	176

Table 2: Enhanced coverage of the longline fleet covered under the 100% requirement in the Gulf of Mexico. Number of vessels observed, areas of fishing activity, total hauls observed, and total days at-sea conducted by the SEFSC Miami Laboratory POP from March 9th to March 31, 2008.

Vessel Name	Trip Number	Area	Total Hauls	Total Sea Days
1094947 VICTORIA	T02041	GOM	2	4
600048 KIM THANH II	B06001	GOM	10	18
1029712 KENNY BOY	T03003	GOM	8	18
681390 TRAN BROTHERS	J04001	GOM	8	12
905679 CAPT MIKE	P04001	GOM	5	12
911014 PEACEFUL LADY	N04003	GOM	9	18
911431 CAPT DAVID	E04003	GOM	3	6
911631 ST JOSEPH & PETER	Q03003	GOM	10	19
918932 MORNING STARS	K05001	GOM	9	12
918933 MISS LENA	I04001	GOM	4	13
923317 SEA QUEEN	S02002	GOM	7	14
926359 QUEENSLAND	H04001	GOM	8	18
936041 CECILIA II	S01097	GOM	5	15
937416 KIM THANH PN	T02040	GOM	10	18
942269 DEQUEEN	C03003	GOM	1	5
942269 DEQUEEN	C03004	GOM	1	3
995485 SEA QUEEN III	J02073	GOM	8	15
1094947 VICTORIA	C04001	GOM	0	3
Totals:			108	223

Table 3: Percent coverage (by hauls), the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for January 1 to March 31, 2008 during regular fishing operations.

(A=Alive, D=Dead, U=Unknown. LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL HAULS OBSERVED	REQUIRED 8% COVERAGE	TURTLES			MAMMALS		BIRDS	
			A	D	U	A	D	A	D
			LB/LH/O						
GOM-2	131 (12.6%)	83	4/ 0/0	0	0	0	1	0	0
FEC-3	38 (19.0%)	16	3/ 1/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	8 (5.3%)	12	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MAB-5	0 (0.0%)	13	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OFFSHORE	10 (7.3%)	11	1/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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TOTAL	187 (11.1%)	135	8/ 1/0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
GOM	106,701
FEC	25,951
SAB	6,030
OFF	11,220
TOTAL	149,902

Table 4: Effort (hauls and hooks) and the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds) summarized by geographical area for January 1 to March 31, 2008 during experimental fishing operations inside closed areas.

(A=Alive, D=Dead, U=Unknown. LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL HAULS OBSERVED	TURTLES			MAMMALS		BIRDS	
		A	D	U	A	D	A	D
		LB/LH/O						
FEC-3	5	1/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	7	1/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0
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TOTAL	12	2/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
FEC	2,330
SAB	3,500
TOTAL	5,830

Table 5: Listing of selected vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during quarter 1, 2008 (January 1 to March 31); excluding vessels selected for coverage in the Gulf of Mexico. Short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1)No bunk available;(2)Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;(3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4)No communication with observer office/staff; (5)Not fishing (involved in another fishery);(6)Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7)other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
BJORN II	947927	Reason 5. Certified letter received. Owner contacted POP to indicate the vessel was tilefishing and would not fish pelagic gear during the quarter. POP requested 6 sets for the quarter. Logbook submissions: No fishing reports submitted for January and February.
CANDACE	673556	Reason 7. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP office to indicate that his vessel would not be able to get a current safety decal in Trinidad. However, he offered to take an observer on another of his vessels (F/V Rebel Lady) for the same place and time. Observer was deployed and coverage was achieved.
CAPT ROBINSON	907061	Reasons 4 and 6. Certified letter received. Owner called in February to indicate vessel's engine needed to be replaced. POP requested 5 sets for the quarter. Landings reported on 1/17, 2/10.

Table 5 (continued): Listing of selected vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during quarter 1, 2008 (January 1 to March 31); excluding vessels selected for coverage in the Gulf of Mexico. Short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1)No bunk available;(2)Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;(3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4)No communication with observer office/staff; (5)Not fishing (involved in another fishery);(6)Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7)other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
CHRISTOPHER JOE	608436	Reason 7. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP with advance notice, but on one occasion a last minute personal emergency prevented the observer from deploying, and on a second occasion no observer was available. POP requested 4 sets for the quarter.
EAGLET II	541694	Reason 3. Certified letter received. Vessel lacks a current safety decal. POP requested 4 sets for the quarter. Landings reported on 2/10, 2/28.
EYELANDER	659026	Reason 7. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to schedule an observer, but no observer was available during that time. POP requested 14 sets for the quarter. Vessel landings reported 1/30, 2/25, and 3/23.
FRANCES ANNE	604915	Reason 5. Certified letter received. Vessel not fishing pelagic gear this quarter. POP requested 9 sets for the quarter. No fishing reports for Jan., Feb., and March.

Table 5 (continued): Listing of selected vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during quarter 1, 2008 (January 1 to March 31); excluding vessels selected for coverage in the Gulf of Mexico. Short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1)No bunk available;(2)Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;(3) Lack of current CFVSE decal;(4)No communication with observer office/staff; (5)Not fishing (involved in another fishery);(6)Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7)other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
HATUNA MATATA	586413	Reason 7. Certified letter received. No observer available. POP requested 5 sets for the quarter. Vessel reported landings on 1/23 and 2/13.
JOSHUA NICOLE	912738	Reason 4. Certified letter received. No observer available. POP requested 1 set for the quarter. Vessel reported landings on 1/3, 1/8, 1/23, 2/6, 2/22, 3/5, 3/16 and 3/23.
SARAH BETH	608322	Reason 5. Certified letter received. Vessel not fishing pelagic gear this quarter. POP requested 3 sets for the quarter. Vessel did not report any landings during quarter 1.
STAR SEA	991695	Reason 5. Certified letter received. Vessel not fishing pelagic gear this quarter. POP requested 4 sets for the quarter. Vessel did not report any landings during quarter 1.

Table 5 (continued): Listing of selected vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during quarter 1, 2008 (January 1 to March 31); excluding vessels selected for coverage in the Gulf of Mexico. Short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: (1)No bunk available;(2)Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;(3) Lack of current CFVSE decal; (4)No communication with observer office/staff; (5)Not fishing (involved in another fishery);(6)Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and (7)other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
ST PAUL PETER	929437	Reason 7. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to schedule an observer, but no observer was available during that time. POP requested 7 sets for the quarter. Vessel landings reported 1/29 and 2/27.

Table 6: The POP coverage completed aboard the pelagic longline fleet by quarter and year since the publication of the 2004 Biological Opinion. The number of trips observed include vessels that are covered multiple times during a quarter. The number of unique vessels observed represents those vessels only covered at least once by an observer.

Quarter	Year	No. of Vessels Selected	No. of Trips Observed	No. of Unique Vessels Observed
3	2004	44	29	29
4	2004	30	28	14
1	2005	34	26	12
2	2005	45	22	9
3	2005	41	19	7
4	2005	28	14	1
1	2006	31	20	4
2	2006	33	23	2
3	2006	39	22	2
4	2006	24	17	1
1	2007	20	17	1
2	2007	65	43	4
3	2007	42	28	4
4	2007	29	20	1
1	2008	81	33	1
Cumulative Totals			361	92
